

was about to enjoy a period of sneezing. The ammunition dump was replenished with a large supply of pocket handkerchiefs with which to receive the enemy. Suddenly the mind conjured up the vision of the physical result of this idea and, "ker-choo!" the victim burst into a hearty, spasmodic sneeze. The impish idea triumphed. From that moment the victim made noises like unto a minuscule forger, and if a bridge player occasionally sneezed the dummy into his partner's lap. All of which you readily understand was the wrong idea.

If, on the other hand, the aforesaid victim when noticing the blushing buds, spotting the rose bushes in his or her garden, religiously excluded the idea of a sneeze, disdained to scold the laundry maid for not doing up sufficient handkerchiefs and cheerfully burst into a verse of "Roses, roses, all the way," why, he or she would pass the hay fever period without so much as one tickling sensation in the upper nasal regions.

Will hay fever sufferers, preferably from Missouri, try the experiment and report?

The next point discussed by M. Coue was the conflict between the Will and the Imagination. According to the Nancy chemist, in this battle the Will must always take the count. Here is the key-stone of autosuggestion. This Will vs. imagination theory opens a Niagara Falls flood of discussion. I have known strong-willed men in my day, from Roosevelt to Pershing, and they certainly plucked prize peaches from the Tree of Life. Looking for a conspicuous example of highly developed imagination, we have Sir Conan Doyle and G. B. Shaw.

Think the proposition out for yourself.

After M. Coue had explained his theories he called for volunteers for the hand-clasp experiment. Briefly, the patient clasps the hands, the arms held horizontally, and presses the palms together with increasing strength, repeating rapidly: "I cannot open them; I cannot open them; I cannot; I cannot; I cannot!" with the result that it is found impossible to separate the palms. M. Coue stands beside the patient, also repeating, "Cannot, cannot, cannot." The victim struggles impotently to tear the hands apart. Suddenly M. Coue says, "You can!" and the hands spring apart to the patient's sighing relief. In all but one case M. Coue succeeded in this experiment. Yes, I plead guilty.

I watched each lady in turn and several of the men come under the spell of "I cannot, I cannot, I cannot!" noting the look of wonder and relief at the magic words "You can!" as their hands came apart. Then I offered myself for the experiment.

I followed instructions implicitly. I straightened my arms. I put all my muscles into grasping my hands together until they trembled with the effort. I repeated "I cannot open them. I cannot! I cannot! I cannot!" but some joker at the back of my mind kept laughing in my ear and whispering, "You poor boob, you know darn well you can." So when M. Coue declared I could not separate the palms, unfortunately for the demonstration, they dropped apart. We tried a second time, with an equally unsatisfactory result. I could hear that little joker in the back of my mind laughing to split

himself. The third time, well—I had the same feeling one has when one is on the platform with the prestidigitator—it's not playing the game to spoil the trick. So I let them stick.

These hand-clasping experiments successfully concluded, M. Coue showed how one should intone the phrase, "Day by day, in every way, I grow better and better" and further explained the method of achieving self-cure, laying great stress on the necessary unconsciousness of effort. "Just as if you were saying your prayers—say it without thinking of the meaning." He also went into the "Ca passe" formula for the immediate relief of pain.

Having thus summarized the master influence of autosuggestion our healer called for statements from any among us who had received benefit from the practice of his method.

Four elderly ladies related their experiences. One, after two years of the Coue regime had reduced a swelling in her neck. Another had eliminated a pain in her back. A third from being hardly able to crawl was now able to get about quite comfortably, thank you. The fourth proclaimed to the world that she was forever rid of "buzzes in the head." We all joined M. Coue in congratulating them.

Finally, as the climax of the seance, M. Coue called any one suffering a present pain to the mourners' bench. It must be a present pain. My own trouble gave me no pain at the moment, neither did the paralyzed arm of the former officer, who sat in front of me.

However, three elderly ladies complained of present dolor. The first, one of those nice, grandmotherly dames, suf-

fered much in the ankles. A sister, who I forgot her name, grimaced at the pain in her left leg. M. Coue addressed himself to each in turn. For all his method was the same. Closing his eyes, he gently rubbed the afflicted member, repeating with the victim what I suppose was meant to be "passé." But so rapidly did our instructor gabble it that it sounded exactly like "Saba-saba-saba-saba-saba-saba-saba." Yet after a few minutes each of the patients proclaimed the pain gone or much improved. Then a rather pretty young woman shyly presented herself for treatment. Her heart gave her sore travail. But even this gave way before gentle rubbing and the "saba" jargon, for in a few minutes the girl smiled, relaxed and sat down. There could be no doubt at her heartease.

And what is my hard-boiled opinion of this latest brand of faith healing? As I stated above, I am assuredly no skeptic. Neither is M. Coue a Columbus, when he tells us we can often drive out pain with right thinking. Even jealous medical men admit that the mind exercises potent influence over the welfare of its body. Autosuggestion is a new name for an old brand of goods.

This in no way detracts from M. Coue. He has arrived at like conclusions from the medico-chemistry route. While I cannot vouch for the various cures set forth in the Coue pamphlets, yet I, one of those "O ye of little faith," left the seance deeply conscious that this reserved and gentle Frenchman opened a gate through which many would pass to the happy land of health.

Haply, It Comes but Once a Year

'Twas the Week After Christmas, and the Story Is of One
Who Jumped Out of the Smoking Jacket Into the Fire

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE

Illustrations by MERLE JOHNSON

"YOU can take it back if it doesn't fit," said the donor, as she plucked a neatly wrapped parcel, bound with a holly-embellished ribbon, from the Christmas tree. "It came Saturday night, and I haven't even opened it. Try it on and perhaps you can wear it to-day."

So I tried it on, but I couldn't wear it that day. What I needed in a smoking jacket was a boy's size, not having been fashioned in heroic mold. The packet contained a garment that must have been made for Chief Justice Taft and returned by him because it was too large.

I was disappointed, for I had ruined my last smoking jacket while I was changing the grease in the differential of the flivver. I always imagine that that job can be done in a cleanly manner if one is careful. But I always am wrong. It can't.

Of course, there was nothing to do but to take it back, which errand I started upon the day after Christmas. The more I thought about the carelessness of the store people in sending me a smoking jacket that I could have used for a tent the angrier I became. When I got to the store where the lady said she purchased it I was in a highly punitive mood.

There is more leisure in a store after Christmas than before. The salesmen have plenty of time to attend to customers and appear glad to see them.

At the counter behind which other smoking jackets were folded neatly on a shelf I found a brightly smiling young man, who advanced eagerly to meet me. But I was in no humor to be placated.

"Look here—what kind of a store do you call this?" I demanded, as I slapped the package on the counter.

The young man considered for a moment.

"Why, when I have occasion to refer to it, sir," he replied, "I call it a gent's furnishing store. Sometimes I call it a tog-

gery, or a smart style shop."

"I don't mean that!" I snapped. "I mean what kind of service do you call it when you send customers smoking jackets which are big enough for overcoats?"

"I shouldn't call that service," said the young man. "My idea of service is—"

"I wasn't asking for your idea of service! I hate the word 'service,' anyway, and I'm sorry I used it. But how can you expect people to keep coming here when you ruin their Christmas for them by inexcusable carelessness?"

"I wish you would state your grievance, sir."

"Here it is," I said, tearing open the box. "Look at that!"

"Very neat," said the young man, admiringly regarding the jacket.

"Possibly," I said, snatching off my coat and enveloping myself in the garment. "But look at it!"

"Something too large," said the young man. "You, if you will permit me, are somewhat too slight of figure for it."

"Say, I didn't come here to bandy euphemisms! I want you to give me another one for it!"

"That," said the man, "is not our business."

"Not your business? What the deuce do you mean by that? Won't you take it back?"

"I would not have the authority to do

so, but I might consult the manager; you can wait."

"Well, don't be too long. I'm in a hurry."

He bowed and walked toward the rear of the store. As he departed a large, sinewy man with flat feet, who had been pacing the aisle as I came in, approached and stood regarding me fixedly.

After what seemed an hour the salesman returned. "This way, sir," he said, picking up the smoking jacket.

I followed him into a little glass-enclosed office, where a large, stern man sat at a desk.

"I understand you want us to give you another smoking jacket for the one you brought in," he said, briefly.

"Your understanding does you credit, I said, bitterly. "I had not expected anybody to understand anything in the place."

"I'm sorry," he replied; "but we don't do that."

"You mean to say that you don't take back garments that are twenty sizes too large when some fool shipping clerk sends them to customers by mistake?"

"But we didn't send this smoking jacket to you by mistake."

"Oh! You didn't, hey? Then you confess that you tried to saw off on me a smoking jacket that would be of use to anybody but a circus giant?"

"No; not at all."

"Well, will you"—but my voice gave out.

"Certainly I will. We didn't send you this smoking jacket at all. If you had looked at the name inside the collar you would have seen that it was purchased at the store across the street."

I made no reply. What reply was there to make?

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